



# TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Quick Fact Sheet

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a universal meal plan under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) that permits eligible districts and schools to provide meal service to all students at no charge, regardless of economic status. (*Section 104a of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act*)

To be eligible to participate, a district, school, or groups of schools from the same district must have a **directly certified** identified student percentage of at least 40% by April 1, prior to the first year of implementation. Each school does not have to meet the 40% threshold individually if enrolling a district or groups of school within a district; however the average directly certified identified student percentage must be at least 40%.

$$\text{Identified Student Percentage} = \frac{\text{Number of Identified Students}}{\text{Number of Enrolled Students}} \times 100$$

Requirements of CEP for participating districts/schools are: 1) serve free meals to all students in participating schools; 2) maintain a count of reimbursable meals served to students daily; 3) cover the costs of providing free meals to all students that exceed the Federal reimbursement locally (with non-Federal funds); and 4) comply with all program requirements.

The program cycle is four years. Once enrolled, there is no need to recalculate eligibility during the four year cycle; however participating districts/schools may establish a most current identified student percentage by April 1, of the prior school year.

### Tennessee Process for Enrolling and Implementing CEP

The list of **eligible and nearly eligible schools** is posted on the department website. Districts/schools that want to enroll in CEP must do so by June 30 through the regular annual NSLP application via the Tennessee: Meals, Accounting and Claiming (TMAC).

In Tennessee, data gathered from Free and Reduced Priced Lunch (FRPL) applications is used in part to determine school level allocations of Title I, IDEA, BEP, E-rate and for accountability in determining the subgroup "Economically Disadvantaged". CEP schools will be required to use the State Household Survey to collect the socioeconomic data that was previously collected through the FRPL application. The form and a sample letter for parents are available on the department website. Schools are encouraged to use school letterhead and to customize the sample letter in a manner that will resonate with the parents/guardians of its students. Staff paid 100% from school nutrition funds cannot collect or process these household surveys. Non-CEP schools will continue to utilize that standard FRPL form. Both CEP and non-CEP schools will be required to upload data through EIS for accountability and funding purposes.

Additional information on community eligibility provision is available on the department website [http://tn.gov/education/health\\_safety/cep.shtml](http://tn.gov/education/health_safety/cep.shtml)